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Editor's Notes

Stuart L. Love
slove@pepperdine.edu

D'Esta Love
dlove@pepperdine.edu

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love and Stuart Love

Our Volume 20, Second Quarter 2012 issue of *Leaven* entitled “Gender-Inclusion Among Churches of Christ” was developed from a panel session at the June 2011 Christian Scholars’ Conference at Pepperdine University. It included representative stories of churches that were moving for greater gender inclusion among Churches of Christ. Narratives were written by elders in five congregations including John Willis of Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas; Robert Randolph of Brookline Church of Christ, Brookline, Massachusetts; Stuart Love of University Church of Christ, Malibu, California; Patrick Graham of Northlake Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia; and Tom Robinson of Manhattan Church of Christ, Manhattan, New York.

Soon after the publication of the issue, **JEFF MILLER**, who teaches New Testament at Milligan College, asked whether a similar issue could be written that would address women’s advancement among Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. We were eager for Dr. Miller to take on the project, and the fruits of his labor are set forth in this issue. Your editors are struck by the similarity of the progress among Christian Churches with the possible exception of the appointment of women elders. Kathy Pulley, guest editor of the first issue, concluded in her introduction, “Complete gender inclusion has a long way to go...” But, we might add, significant strides have taken place and we believe more are to come. We turn now to the guest editor’s introduction by Jeff.

Guest Editor’s Introduction

Jeff Miller

In the gospels of Matthew and Luke, the thirteenth chapter of each, we find two complementary and consecutive parables of Jesus. First we read that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that a man sows in his garden; the next parable compares the kingdom to leaven that a woman mixes into three measures of flour. In addition to learning about the kingdom from the content of these parallel parables, we can also infer from here and elsewhere (Luke 15.4–10, for example) that the kingdom is for both men and women—it includes both, enriches both, challenges both, and it should be presented in ways that relate to both.

The current issue of *Leaven* mimics this inclusive and unifying lesson of the parable of the leaven. The contributors are seven women and seven men who together recount some of the joys and challenges experienced when a Christian congregation sets out to increase the involvement of women in leadership and service. In addition to these fourteen contributors, I must mention Mandy Chambers, a member of Hardin Valley Church of Christ west of Knoxville, Tennessee, and an exemplary student at Milligan College, who has made this issue of *Leaven* better by proofreading its every word.

The opening two articles give insight into the blessings of experiencing the ministry of women. First, Pat Magness speaks as one who has many times been challenged and enriched by the preaching, teaching, and leadership of women. Second, Mandy Smith reflects on leading from a position of weakness. The eight subsequent articles tell the stories of eleven congregations in California, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, Maryland, and

Tennessee, focusing primarily either on a particular woman's ministry (two firsthand accounts by **LAURA BUFFINGTON** and **MARY TURNER**) or on the shift made by a congregation (thoughtful, thought-provoking narratives and observations by **TODD EDMONDSON**, **ELIZABETH GENTRY**, **BOB HULL**, **LEROY SHEPHERD**, **BRUCE AND ROSEMARIE SHIELDS**, and **MYRON TAYLOR**). The last article is one I wrote to offer encouragement and a handful of challenges to those readers who may not wholly agree with the theme of this issue of *Leaven*. The issue rises to its end with two worship resources: a poem by Heather Hoover and a reading by Lee Magness.

The ministry of women has indeed acted as leaven for the Restoration Movement, enriching the whole batch of dough as it were. It is our hope that you will be encouraged by the following examples from among the Christian Churches.

AS A TEACHER OF THE BIBLE, MILLIGAN PROFESSOR **JEFF MILLER** NAVIGATES THIS TOPIC WITH RESPECT FOR THOSE BIBLICAL TEXTS WHICH CONCERN THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH, AND WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY YOUNG WOMEN WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH HIS COURSES AND GONE ON TO SERVE THE CHURCH IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES. MOREOVER, HE APPROACHES THIS TOPIC AS HUSBAND OF DANA, FATHER OF DANIELLE AND CASSADY, AND GRANDFATHER OF CLAIRE, WHO WILL BE BORN SHORTLY AFTER THIS ISSUE OF *LEAVEN* IS PRINTED. IT IS HIS HOPE THAT CLAIRE'S GENERATION WILL LOOK BACK ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH'S GENDER WARS AS REGRETTABLE SQUABBLES FROM DAYS GONE BY (JDMILLER@MILLIGAN.EDU).

